



**Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Media and Communications Division**

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State Rep. Paul Boyer Receives Inaugural ASDB Axios Award: Champion for Deaf and Blind Children



State Rep. Paul Boyer, immediately after having been adorned with the Axios award medal.

Phoenix, AZ, October 13, 2017 – Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB)

Superintendent Annette Reichman proudly announced State Representative Paul Boyer is the recipient of the agency's inaugural ASDB Axios Award: Champion for Deaf and Blind Children. Representative Boyer was honored at ASDB's Phoenix Day School for the Deaf homecoming game on September 30, 2017. The ASDB Axios Award was created to honor individuals who go "above and beyond" in advocating for issues critically important to both ASDB and to the many children and families that it serves.

"Paul Boyer is a champion for children all across Arizona who are deaf, blind or deafblind," said ASDB Superintendent Annette Reichman. "Rep. Boyer led the charge to update archaic statutes that governed how ASDB operated and how it was defined, including the removal of the offensive term 'dumb' in reference to Arizona's schools for the deaf and the blind. One hundred and seventeen years after the term was first put into law, Rep. Boyer had it removed."

For over 100 hundred years, the State of Arizona had in its statutes language that referred to ASDB as the schools for “the deaf, **dumb** and blind,” until Rep. Boyer led the effort to have the offensive and inaccurate term “dumb” stricken from its association with children who are deaf or blind. Due to Rep. Boyer’s leadership, in 2017 and going forward, ASDB will be listed in Arizona Revised Statute referring to its creation as “schools for the deaf and the blind.”

Superintendent Reichman continued, “When ASDB asked for help from the legislature to help meet the educational and support needs of the rapidly growing number of Arizona families with infants and toddlers who are deaf and/or blind, Paul Boyer immediately took action—and continues to take action—to adequately fund ASDB’s Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) program.”

Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind’s ECFE program provides services to infants and toddlers who are deaf and/or blind during their critical years of birth to age three – when 80% of a child’s brain development occurs. The number of families in Arizona participating in the ECFE program has rapidly grown by over 70% from 2011 to 2017. Unfortunately, having not received a corresponding increase in funding to match the increase in demand for assistance, the number of early childhood education and intervention services provided to Arizona’s infants and toddlers who are deaf or blind has significantly declined.

Superintendent Reichman concluded, “Now, in preparation for the upcoming 2018-19 legislative cycle, Rep. Boyer, once again, has partnered with ASDB to help improve outcomes for children who are deaf or blind. He is crafting legislation that will ensure every time local school districts, students and teachers get more funding from state government, so, too, will ASDB and its students and teachers. For these tremendous efforts and results, and many more, I am pleased to honor Paul Boyer with ASDB’s inaugural Axios Award: Champion for Deaf and Blind Children.”

Since Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind is technically both a state agency and a public corporation, it has inadvertently and historically been excluded from legislation that increases funding for public schools. Follow up bills to retroactively correct lack-of-funding oversights are often necessary.

The ASDB Axios Award: Champion for Deaf and Blind Children is made possible by the generosity of private donations. The award is an embossed bronze medallion with an affixed ribbon. To symbolize the award’s tie-in to the education of the deaf and of the blind, the obverse of the medallion has the agency’s acronym “ASDB” embossed in braille; the ribbon showcases handshapes in American Sign Language spelling out “A-S-D-B.”

The [Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind \(ASDB\)](#) was founded in 1912 – the year of Arizona’s statehood. ASDB educates over 2,000 children who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing, multisensory disabled or deafblind from birth to age 21. ASDB operates two schools for the deaf, one school for the blind, a statewide birth-to-three early childhood and family education program and five regional cooperatives. ASDB is dedicated to empowering young children and students with the educational opportunities necessary to succeed in college, career and life. For more information, contact Ryan Ducharme by email at ryan.ducharme@asdb.az.gov or by phone at 602-771-1092.

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